

Submitter: Kerbi Gagne
On Behalf Of: National Animal Interest Alliance
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

Greetings members of the House Judiciary Committee,
My name is Vanessa Gagne and I am testifying on behalf of the National Animal Interest Alliance in opposition to HB 3214. As a professional member of the Elephant Managers Association for 12 years and former zookeeper, I work with NAIA to provide fact based analyses regarding the care and conservation of exotic animals.

Passing this legislation will lead to incrementalism meant to destroy the human-animal bond.

Working closely with exotic animals has evolved over the decades to provide the highest standards of animal welfare possible. Today, the free contact management of animals faces a constant barrage of targeted ads and protests that doesn't accurately depict the truth of what happens in the daily lives of those animals living and working alongside people. These animals are cared for by people who have dedicated their lives to working with them; it is a labor of love. Their owners must be federally licensed and maintain impeccable records in order to operate in addition to individual state animal welfare laws. They are subject to stringent rules and can be inspected anytime without notice by a USDA APHIS inspector or animal control officer.

This bill offers no exemptions for ZAA or other accredited facilities, and would alienate small business owners in good standing that find AZA accreditation cost prohibitive.

The proposed list of banned animals, while detailed, does not directly address any claims of suspected abuse - it only bans animals. By definition GFAS facilities do not take their animals off site, so providing them with an exemption is superfluous. There are no specifications on method of transport, caging, handling, or personnel training. That would also need to include veterinary consultation as well as input from industry experts that have hands-on experience. All of those measures are absent from the bill language.

Some of the species listed are not harmful to people and actually make a big impact when used in educational programs like tortoises and opossums. The list bans animals native to Oregon that can be used to educate people about human-wildlife conflict. The language is too broad to distinguish between what could be considered a display or an educational program and the behaviors required to train an animal for shows could be misconstrued as "tricks."

Big cats are listed even though it is now federally illegal to use them in performances under the Big Cat Public Safety act, making that section redundant.

Dromedary camels are listed as exotic even though they have been domesticated for

nearly four thousand years, but an exception remains for reindeer who were domesticated within the same time frame. Banning camel performances would end any and all Christmas pageants using them for nativities.

Most troubling is the language in the bill that will require an animal owner in violation to forfeit ownership of an animal used in a performance that is part of the banned list. The bill does not specify what entity, person or facility, would take charge of the transferred animal.

We ask that you please oppose HB 3214 in its entirety. The state of Oregon already has excellent animal welfare laws in the books that cover neglect and abuse, please enforce those instead.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I am always available for questions or concerns.